

KEHOE'S CORNER

News from the office of Senator Christine Kehoe



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Local Government, Chair
Budget and Fiscal Review
Energy, Utilities
and Communications

Natural Resources & Water
Transportation & Housing
Joint Committee on
Homeland Security and
Emergency Services, Chair

In the News...

San Diego Union Tribune op-ed, January 12, 2006

Something Democrats can work with

The State Budget

By Christine Kehoe

If all goes well, 40 or 50 years from now, Californians will be able to look back on 2006 with the same sense of appreciation that longtime residents feel for the wonderful public facilities that were built in the late 1950s and '60s in our state.

During those years, the state of California invested in the freeways, aqueducts and university campuses that we still use today.

Elected officials are again faced with the challenge of providing for the needs of our 38 million residents while planning for the needs of California in the year 2050. By then our population is expected to reach nearly 55 million. San Diego County alone will have grown to over 4.5 million. Such phenomenal growth will require the construction of tens of thousands of school classrooms, new hospitals, and thousands of miles of new highways.

To meet this challenge, we would be well-served to look to the past for guidance. Fifty years ago, California's leaders made a commitment to expand facilities to meet the rapid postwar growth. At that time, few could have anticipated the unprecedented growth that would continue for decades, or the political gridlock that would hamstring efforts to address the mounting critical infrastructure needs of the state. We must get back to basics.

Now, these problems demand our immediate attention and strong leadership from the governor as well as bipartisan cooperation from the Legislature. Last week, in his State of the State address to both houses of the Legislature, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger challenged us to embrace his plan. He unveiled an aggressive ten-year, \$222 billion strategic growth campaign to close the gap in our transportation, education, and water supply needs.

The governor issued a simple challenge to all of us to just "build it." Meeting that challenge comes with a huge price tag, and that's the rub. We must devise a fiscally sound way to support this spending.

The governor has met with some criticism from Republicans for his proposal to use massive borrowing and some fees to fund his plan. Some Democrats don't agree with his funding priorities. Many Democrats, like me, welcome Gov. Schwarzenegger's new tone. We want to put aside the divisiveness of the past year. I'm pleased to see him reassert himself as the leader of a united effort to get back to basics – meeting the education, transportation, energy and health care needs of all Californians.

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Californians have a right to expect that from their elected leaders. The progress that was made in the governor's first year in office was due to his bipartisan legislative program. There is no reason that we cannot make similar gains this year by working cooperatively.

What the governor's State of the State address conveys is his commitment to implement the programs supported by the vast majority of Californians. While some criticize the governor's perceived lack of fiscal responsibility, the opponents fail to acknowledge the thousands of private sector jobs that will be created by such an aggressive construction program or the benefits for individuals and businesses alike from less time spent in delivering goods or commuting. A better educated work force, more disposable income as a result of a consistent and affordable energy program, and a healthier work force with fewer sick days are just some of the economic benefits produced by such investment. We need to put California's economic creativity and innovation front and center again.

Together we can ensure that California is on the right track, and will continue to be our "Golden State."

The real challenge for the governor will be to generate support for his plans from the members of his own party. As Sen. Dave Cox, the Republican vice chair of my Senate Local Government Committee, quipped to the media after the governor's speech, "The insidious thing about borrowing is that you have to pay it back."

There are some legitimate disagreements regarding the governor's plan. There is a significant omission with the failure to address California's severe housing shortage. Similarly, there is no money proposed for open space and park acquisition, an increasingly urgent need – particularly in urban areas – with more and more people coming into this state every day. There are also areas that receive some attention, but in our view, not enough. For instance, although the governor proposes \$107 billion for transportation projects, his mass transit proposal is inadequate. These are policy questions that will be addressed in the coming legislative discussions.

Nevertheless, there is much to praise in his plan. Significant investments are proposed in levee repair for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta through which much of Southern California's water supply must travel before reaching San Diego. Not a very glamorous issue perhaps, but one that is vital to our economy and public health.

Starting with the election in June, Californians will be able to determine for themselves whether these are efforts that we are willing to support. If the Legislature and governor are able to work cooperatively and make our case to the voters, I hope California will be willing to bear the burden of bringing our great state up to the demands of the new millennium. Together we can ensure that California is on the right track, and will continue to be our "Golden State."

Link to article:

http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060112/news_lz1e12kehoe.html

The Governor's 2006-07 Budget Proposal

On January 10, the Governor released his budget proposal for 2006-07. Governor Schwarzenegger proposed a \$125.6 billion state budget that uses a surge in tax revenue to boost spending for schools, transportation and most other programs except for welfare. Main details included in the proposal are:

- No new taxes.
- A \$4.3 billion increase for K-12 education and community colleges. The increase includes a \$1.7 billion repayment that school groups say is about one-third of what is owed under an agreement made two years ago.
- Early repayment of \$920 million taken from transportation to help balance previous budgets by suspending Proposition 42, which requires the sales tax on gasoline be used for transportation purposes. The budget also leaves Proposition 42 in place next year, giving transportation an additional \$1.4 billion.
- A delay in increasing payments to the aged, blind and disabled, and a \$240 million reduction in child care and other funding for the CalWORKS welfare program.

To access details on this budget, go to the website of the California Department of Finance at: <http://govbud.dof.ca.gov/home.htm>

Go to
<http://govbud.dof.ca.gov>
to access the
**Governor's 2006-07
Budget Proposal**

Legislative Analyst's Office Reviews the Governor's Budget

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has been providing fiscal and policy advice to the Legislature for more than 55 years.

It is known for its fiscal and programmatic expertise and nonpartisan analyses of the state's budget.

For details on the LAO's review of the Governor's Budget proposal, go to their website at: www.lao.ca.gov

Kehoe Seeks to Reimburse San Diego for Special Election Costs

Counties throughout California have been hit hard by the costs of special elections, which can result in hundreds of thousands, or even millions of dollars in unanticipated costs.

San Diego will incur an estimated \$1.35 million cost to fund the April 11 special election needed to replace Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham.

Because of this, I am coauthoring legislation that would require the state to reimburse the county this money. The bill also would require the state to reimburse counties for future special elections to fill posts in Washington or

Sacramento if other unexpected vacancies occur. This measure aims to ensure that elections go forward in a timely manner, which is important so that Californians are properly represented by their governments.

For more information on this bill, go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by bill number AB 1799. To read the San Diego Union Tribune's article on this measure, search their website at www.sosd.com. Direct link to article: http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20060110/news_1m10sdmoney.html

Go to
www.leginfo.ca.gov
to access information
on legislation or
California code

Contact Information

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Committee Assignments

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Services, Chair

Annual 5th Grade Essay Contest Kicking Off!

Each year I host an essay contest that is open to all 5th grade students in the 39th Senate District. Students are asked to write a one-page persuasive letter to their principal, the editor of the local paper, or their State Senator.

All participants will receive a state certificate of recognition. First, second, and third place winners receive prizes. The school submitting the most entries receives a grand prize. Prizes are not at government expense.

If you know of a 5th grade student or class that may be interested, more details are available on the "Events" section of my website at: www.sen.ca.gov/kehoe. Essay deadline is February 28.



Senator Kehoe with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of her 2005 5th Grade Student Essay Contest

Health Insurance Counseling Program can Assist With Drug Benefit Changes

The Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) is an organization funded by the State and the County to assist persons who have Medicare or both Medicare and Medi-Cal.

If you have been affected by the recent Medicare prescription drug benefits changes and need assistance, you can contact HICAP at: 1 (800) 434-0222. You may also contact my office at (619) 645-3133 or Senator.Kehoe@sen.ca.gov if you need assistance with understanding your new prescription benefits.

Get Help Paying for College - CALGRANT Workshops in San Diego

Cal Grants, which are funded by the State of California, are one of the smartest ways to get cash for college. With a Cal Grant you can get up to \$8,300 a year to pay for college expenses. The California Student Aid Commission will be holding a series of Cal Grant workshops in San Diego in January and February. For more information on Cal Grants, go to: <http://www.calgrants.org/#>

1/28/2006
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Scottish Rite Center
1895 Camino del Rio South

2/4/2006
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Metro Career Center
3910 University Ave.

2/25/2006
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Educational Cultural Complex
4343 Oceanview Blvd.